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LETTER DATED 25 JULY 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 25 July 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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Annex

Letter dated 25 July 1996 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1031, I attach the eighth report on IFOR operations. I would appreciate your making this report available to the United Nations Security Council.

During the last month, IFOR has placed increased emphasis on support to the OSCE in preparation for the Bosnian elections on 14 September. It was particularly valuable that Richard Holbrooke was able last week to achieve the immediate and permanent withdrawal of Karadzic from all political activities. This removes an important obstacle to the holding of free and fair elections, but we will need to remain vigilant to ensure that the agreement is fully implemented.

I remain content that IFOR continues to provide a secure environment in which the civilian agencies can continue their work to implement the Peace Agreement. However, I am concerned about recent threats directed against the United Nations International Police Task Force. Please be assured that IFOR remains prepared to ensure a secure environment and will not tolerate any deliberate attacks on United Nations or other personnel engaged in implementing the Peace Agreement.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Eighth Report to the United Nations Security Council on IFOR operations

IFOR Operations

1. The multinational implementation force (IFOR) comprises approximately 53,000 personnel deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, from all the NATO nations and from 16 non-NATO contributors. Offers from four additional non-NATO nations are pending. IFOR air assets continue to provide the capability required to secure the airspace, defend and support IFOR ground forces, provide support to civilian agencies within mission capabilities, and to monitor compliance. Although a Memorandum of Agreement with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) on the establishment of a "restricted operating zone" to allow for IFOR close air support training flights has still not yet been signed, operational plans to provide close air support to the United Nations Transitional Authority in East Slavonia (UNTAES) remain in-place. IFOR maritime assets also remain deployed in support of IFOR.

2. During the reporting period, IFOR has continued to carry out its primary task of implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement, with efforts focused on the inspection and verification of barracks/cantonments and air defence weapons storage sites. Ground and aerial patrols of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) and the Zone of Separation (ZOS) have been maintained, as has the monitoring of de-mining operations. In addition, IFOR has developed plans with UNTAES to support an emergency withdrawal of the UNTAES force.

3. Mines continue to pose the greatest risk to IFOR and others. In addition, there have been some recent threats directed against IFOR and the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF), however, IFOR maintains the robust capabilities and Rules of Engagement which enable it to defend itself effectively and to provide protection for others involved in implementing the Peace Agreement.

4. Within its capabilities and subject to the fulfilment of its primary military mission, IFOR has increased its support to the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement. The basis for this support is the maintenance of a secure environment in which the civil organizations can operate. Civilian Freedom of Movement (FOM) remains paramount to the success of all civilian activities in theatre, and thus is a key focus for the way ahead. To facilitate civilian FOM, IFOR has extended its patrolling throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina; it has also made substantial progress in opening up the country by making or supporting large-scale improvements to infrastructure such as roads, bridges and railroads; and it is working closely with the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the IPTF to implement the procedures agreed with the Parties in Geneva on 13 May on IEBL crossings. This work will continue, together with efforts to open airports to commercial traffic. Fundamental to civilian FOM, however, is the requirement for the Parties themselves to comply

with the provisions of the Peace Agreement, and over the past month there has been a number of incidents of restriction of movement which have led to increased tension in some areas.

Cooperation and compliance by the Parties

5. Considerable progress has been registered in the cantonment of the forces and heavy weapons of the former warring factions over the past month. The overall trend is deemed positive, although IFOR has continued to discover undeclared weapons (mostly small arms), which have been disposed of, as necessary, in line with COMIFOR's stated policy post D+180 (17 June). Demobilization continues, albeit at a slow rate, resulting largely from poor internal organization and lack of opportunity in the civil job market. The demobilization process is not therefore expected to be completed until approximately mid-September.

6. Organized Foreign Forces have been withdrawn from Bosnia and Herzegovina, although a limited number of individuals remain. These are not assessed as posing a threat to IFOR or the peace process, but IFOR will continue to monitor this situation. According to the Office of the High Representative, all prisoners of war, for whom the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) have determined that there is insufficient evidence to warrant further detention, have been released. However, there is substantial evidence indicating that the Parties continue to detain prisoners who have not been registered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

7. Negotiations with the Parties on a package of changes to the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) have been successfully completed and these were followed by a signing ceremony in Sarajevo. However, the IEBL discussions have been unsuccessful in resolving the extremely tense situation in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinja.

Cooperation with the High Representative, the OSCE, and other international organizations

8. IFOR remains committed to assisting the successful completion of civilian implementation tasks contained in the Peace Agreement and its Annexes, and will continue to build upon the good cooperation established with the Office of the High Representative and the many civil agencies.

9. Working closely with the European Union Administration, IFOR successfully provided security and other support to the recent elections in Mostar. In preparation for the September elections, IFOR is now strengthening its support for the OSCE and is already fully assisting in the implementation of the election process. This close cooperation will enable IFOR to respond quickly to further OSCE requests for assistance as and when necessary.

10. Under guidance from the NAC, IFOR has begun to share information with OSCE Personal Representative General Vigleik Eide in support of his broader effort to implement the Agreement on subregional arms control, which was concluded in Florence on 14 June. In particular, IFOR is sharing all reliable

data it obtains on weapons holdings inside Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to encourage the credible implementation of this important agreement.

11. IFOR continues to support the ICTY, in particular by carrying out extensive aerial and ground surveillance of alleged mass grave sites to which ICTY has given priority status. IFOR also continues to provide security and logistical support to ICTY teams investigating these sites. The most recent example is the support given by IFOR to the ICTY investigations of alleged mass grave sites in the Srebrenica area, which started on 7 July. IFOR also considers that its extended patrolling to facilitate FOM has significantly restricted the mobility of indicted war criminals.

Force reshaping

12. IFOR is currently being reshaped with forces that are better suited for the tasks facing it during the remainder of its mission. For example, with an increase and extension of patrolling throughout the theatre in order to promote Freedom of Movement in the run up to the elections, mobile units better suited to this task are replacing heavier, armoured units. This reshaping will not significantly affect overall force levels, and IFOR will be maintained at approximately its current force levels until after the elections. It will retain its overall capability until December, when its mandate comes to an end.